

PRAIRIE STATE CONSERVATION COALITION

Making Conservation Land Trusts Stronger

executivedirector@prairiestateconservation.org

www.prairiestateconservation.org

Executive Director Opportunity

The Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC) seeks an Executive Director to help lead and serve a statewide land conservation association, co-developing a shared vision for the future; building coalitions; creating a sustainable financial capacity plan which includes expanding membership; elevating the profile of the land conservation movement; and growing the organization's education, outreach, policy, and advocacy programs. This position will serve as the organization's first full-time staff position, leading the organization in its exciting next chapter as a dynamic statewide collaborator with private and public conservation entities.

PSCC serves Illinois' land conservation and land trust communities and envisions Illinois as a state that celebrates and promotes its rich natural landscapes –places that define our unique, diverse, and proud collective heritage; improve and anchor our economy; and enrich our quality of life by connecting and engaging all people to nature and the outdoors.

Key Details

Posting Date

September 6, 2022

Application Deadline

October 14, 2022

Search Timeline

Applications submitted by October 14, 2022 will be given full consideration but the position is open until filled; early applications are strongly encouraged.

Salary Range

\$80,000-\$90,000, annually, depending on qualifications and prior experience

Reports to

PSCC Board of Directors/PSCC Membership

Location

It is anticipated that the PSCC ED will be a resident of Illinois, with up to three months to relocate (a stipend will be available for relocation costs). Anywhere in Illinois (remote) with hybrid options potentially available depending on location. Must be able to attend occasional in-person regional, statewide, and member meetings as well as travel to Springfield, IL as needed.

Find Out More: Virtual Open Houses

September 20th at 11:30 a.m. CDT *or*

September 22nd at 7 p.m. CDT

Register with vbennett@tnc.org

Send Cover Letter and Resume to

executivedirector@prairiestateconservation.org

About PSCC

Who We Are

PSCC was established in 2005 as the statewide coalition serving Illinois' conservation land trust community. Conservation land trusts are private nonprofit organizations who, as all or part of their mission, work to permanently protect land and water resources. PSCC currently has 23 land trust members that work with landowners on: permanently protecting their land with land sales, conservation easements and other means; community conservation including trails, local parks, local nature areas and more; landscape-level ecosystem restoration; outdoor recreation/public access projects; and other projects of economic and conservation value to Illinois and its residents. To date, PSCC's members have conserved more than 250,000 acres of vital open space, and represent a community of professional staff, board members, financial supporters, and volunteers more than 10,000 strong.

PSCC is currently governed by a 13-member, all-volunteer Board of Directors and is supported by a part-time contracted communications position, together with contract support for bookkeeping and GIS. The PSCC Board has been preparing for the hiring of its first Executive Director for several years. This includes the culture shift that will come as our coalition's membership expands beyond its traditional conservation land trust membership to welcome other public and not-for-profit conservation-minded organizations while also building an operations financial reserve to support the ED's initial years of employment.

Year Founded

2005

Staff Size; Number of Contractors

0; 3

2022 Board Size and Demographics

13; Representatives from member land trusts geographically dispersed throughout the state; 5 women; 7 men; all White but working to diversify

Commitment to JEDI

In 2021, the PSCC Board of Directors adopted a Statement of Intention Regarding Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Organizational Members

43 (land trusts, agencies, individuals)

2022 Annual Operating Budget

\$95,000-\$105,000

Website

www.prairiestateconservation.org

Our Members

Barrington Area Conservation Trust
Citizens for Conservation
CLIFFTOP
The Conservation Foundation
The Conservation Fund
Franklin Creek Conservation
Friends of Sangamon Valley
Grand Prairie Friends
Individual Members

Great Rivers Land Trust
Heartlands Conservancy
Illinois Audubon Society
Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation
Lake Forest Open Lands Association
Land Conservancy of McHenry County
Land Conservation Foundation
Middle Rock Conservation Partners
Natural Land Institute

The Nature Conservancy
Openlands
Parklands Foundation
Prairie Land Conservancy
Prairielands Preservation Foundation
St. Clair County Greenspace Foundation
Sugar Grove Foundation
Wetlands Initiative

PSCC VISION

The Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC) envisions Illinois as a state that celebrates and promotes its rich natural landscapes – places that define our unique, diverse, and proud collective heritage, improve and anchor our economy, and enrich our quality of life by connecting and engaging all people to nature and the outdoors.

PSCC MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to assist conservation land trusts in protecting land and water resources in Illinois. We provide continuing education and training for conservation land trusts and advocate for strong statewide policies that benefit land conservation.

This is to fulfill the promise that our open spaces and wild places will be forever available and inspire generations to protect and care for all life that benefits people and our planet.

PSCC Guiding Principles

We believe in:

- *Preserving land for people*
- *Service to the Entire State*
- *Collaborative Leadership*
- *Building Trust and Awareness*
- *Reflecting All the Communities We Serve*
- *Nature Nurtures*
- *Healthy Natural Ecosystems That Sustain Communities and Strengthen Economies*

PSCC Statement of Intention Regarding Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC) commits to building a Board that is made up of and supports inclusion that reflects the diverse population that lives and works in Illinois. This diversity includes, but is not limited to, age, ability, economic circumstance, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, education, and sexual orientation.

We recognize that our effectiveness and impact will be enhanced, and our mission well served when the practice of diversity, inclusion, and belonging are reflected in all aspects of PSCC, and specifically when we, the Board of Directors, reflect the rich diversity of all our members throughout the state.

However, we understand that supporting diversity goes beyond the makeup of the Board and must include a commitment to building a culture where diverse voices can be heard and respected. As we advance in this important work, we must openly and proactively pursue the cultural changes that will be necessary to meaningfully include these voices.

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Position Summary

With energy, vision, and collaborative skills, the Executive Director will have the opportunity to elevate land and water conservation, farmland protection, environmental education, outdoor recreation, and legislative advocacy by using excellent leadership skills to grow PSCC. The PSCC Executive Director will lead the coalition of land trusts and new members to deliver on PSCC's strategic priorities over time. PSCC's current strategic priorities, which will be the top work priority for the Executive Director, include expanding membership and building fundraising and revenue pipelines. This is a unique opportunity to build the structures and systems for growth of an organization with a strong vision and engaged members. There is important work ahead to generate a new strategic vision; develop innovative new programs; build a team; and drive a culture of learning and growth. PSCC aspires to serve as the united voice for the voluntary land conservation movement in Illinois, working tirelessly to develop and advance land conservation policy, support a dynamic community of practice, and elevate the role of healthy lands and water in a bright future.

The Executive Director will play a critical senior leadership role among Illinois' land conservation community, creating and maintaining strong relationships with all PSCC members, partners, donors, state and federal agencies, and elected officials and their staffs. The Executive Director will lead the organization as it expands membership, adjusts strategic and programmatic focus, launches new initiatives, and evaluates board and membership structure. The position is also responsible for managing PSCC's contractors; creating and managing PSCC's annual budget; administering PSCC's policy efforts and programs; and working with the Board of Directors and membership to ensure abundant organizational resources.

Core Responsibilities

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and manages three part-time contractors to achieve organizational goals. Core responsibilities include:

Leadership and Coalition-Building (25%)

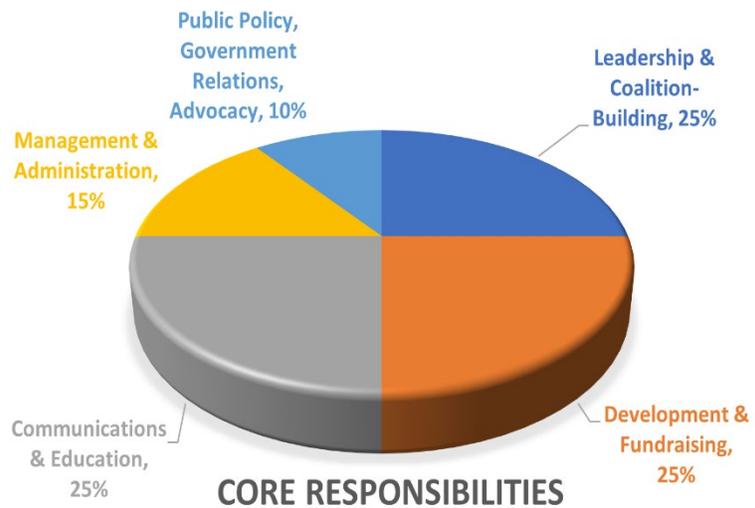
- Working with the board, develop a shared vision for the future of the organization and develop appropriate goals and strategies to advance the mission; refresh organizational priorities and structures accordingly
- Generate a more dynamic and inclusive community of practice in the conservation sector in Illinois
- Identify and cultivate partnerships with a broad spectrum of potential partners including local governments, nonprofit organizations, and business entities.
- Recruit and engage new PSCC members

Development and Fundraising (25%)

- Develop and implement a multi-year plan to build the financial capacity of the organization in service of the membership
- Together with the PSCC Board of Directors, identify and pursue additional fundraising and revenue-generating opportunities
- Prepare and write annual grant applications and grant reports and cultivate sponsorships
- Recruit and engage new PSCC members

Communications and Education (25%)

- Communicate effectively and compellingly to raise the profile of the land conservation movement among the general public
- Lead the delivery of PSCC's signature event, an annual statewide meeting, conference, and training workshop
- Supervise contractors who oversee the PSCC website, member communications, and social media platforms
- Ensure systems for effectively sharing information with the board and members



Management and Administration (15%)

- Demonstrate responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the organization
- Work to develop, maintain, and use systems and resources that facilitate the effective operation of the organization
- Together with the PSCC Board Chair, schedule PSCC board meetings, prepare meeting agendas, and conduct PSCC meeting preparation
- Prepare and manage the PSCC Annual Budget and Work Plan
- Work with members on specific projects, programs, activities, funding campaigns, or other efforts as needed and directed

Public Policy, Government Relations, Advocacy (10%)

- Build and grow the organization's policy and advocacy program as a foundational part of the organization's value proposition
- Effectively advocate for PSCC's mission, representing members with decision makers, donors, partners, agencies, the media, and the broader community
- Collaborate with Illinois Environmental Council, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Prairie Rivers Network, and other advocacy partners at the State Legislature to advance, land, water, and wildlife conservation, and related issues.

Preferred Qualifications

- Minimum of 5 years' experience working at a leadership or senior support role in an organization that reports to a board of directors
- Bachelor's Degree in relevant field; or high school diploma together with minimum 10 years equivalent experience.
- An embracing philosophy and commitment to promote and integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice issues into PSCC's work.
- Demonstrated ability to grow and increase the capacity of non-profit organizations in pursuit of strategic goals and objectives
- Demonstrated ability to lead initiatives and manage multiple tasks within an organization
- Significant experience with fundraising and building other revenue streams, including expanding memberships; grant writing and grant negotiations; overseeing the execution and administration of grant awards; and individual donor fundraising
- Demonstrated experience with, or interest in, the policy arena at the state level, including advocating for proposed legislation
- An understanding of or commitment to learn about Illinois's eco-regions, natural history, conservation issues, and public and private entities dedicated to conservation in the state.

- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills to enable success in the following areas:
 - ✓ Working with a board of directors;
 - ✓ Engaging with the PSCC membership;
 - ✓ Communicating with state, local and national officials;
 - ✓ Communicating with various media;
 - ✓ Advocating for policies that affect the land conservation community in Illinois;
 - ✓ Maintaining contact with donors and grant-making foundations;
 - ✓ Developing and maintaining positive working relationships with other organizations including local volunteer groups;
 - ✓ Identify and develop new and emerging partnerships;
 - ✓ Promote cooperation and collaboration among PSCC member organizations;
 - ✓ Demonstrated ability to listen closely so that when new tools, products, resources are developed, they address the needs of members and partnership organizations not only for the present but to also lead into the future;
 - ✓ Ability to work with diverse staff members, constituents, and key partner organizations.
- Ability to work independently and achieve strategic goals and objectives with little day-to-day oversight

Don't meet every single requirement? Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification. We are dedicated to building a diverse, inclusive and authentic workplace, so if you're excited about this role but your past experience doesn't align perfectly with every qualification in the job description, we encourage you to apply anyways. You may be just the right candidate for this or other roles.

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The Details

This is a permanent, full-time, exempt position with a starting salary range of \$80,000-\$90,000 depending on experience. We may offer flexible work hours per week on a case-by-case basis depending on the season, scheduled events, overtime, or for other reasons. Candidate self-selects up to 70% of the below benefits that are most relevant. Annual pay increases based on budget.

**Generous paid Vacation (15 days), Holidays (11 days),
Personal/Sick/Mental Health (8 days)**

**Health and Dental Insurance Stipend; Unemployment and
Worker's Comp Insurance Provided**

1:1 Retirement plan with up to 3% employer match

**Statewide remote work flexibility; \$1,000 stipend for moving
into Illinois; Mobile phone provided; Stipend for Office
Equipment and Supplies**

**Educational and Certification Opportunities (up to \$2,000 or
budgeted amount); Travel Reimbursement (up to budgeted
amount)**

**Paid Parental Leave (2 weeks; 100% base salary; combined with
Short-Term Disability)**

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter and resume with at least two references as a combined PDF to executivedirector@prairiestateconservation.org with the subject heading: *Job Application: Executive Director – (your last name)*. In your cover letter, please address at least four of the following:

- What do you consider your most important skills that qualify you for this position?
- What is one area of the role that you would be most excited to grow into and why?
- How would you draw on your lived experience and/or your commitments to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion to expand the reach of PSCC's mission and impact?
- Describe characteristics of the ideal team you'd like to work with.
- Share an example of projects or ideas that you've implemented in past roles, and their impact on the organization, your employer, or your community.
- What can we learn from you?

Applications submitted by Friday, October 14, 2022 will receive priority consideration, but the position is open until filled.

The Day-to-Day

Work collaboratively with a wide variety of colleagues as well as in "office" phone and computer work.

The position requires a valid IL driver's license and involves travel throughout the state (1 trip per month on average), sometimes including overnight trips. In particular, occasional travel to Springfield, IL (the capitol) may be necessary for legislative meetings. In addition, the full membership meets annually for in-person statewide meetings and smaller regional gatherings throughout the year. Occasional field visits to project sites may occur and reasonable accommodations will be provided as needed. Reasonable costs associated with travel, room and board will be reimbursed.

PSCC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, political ideology, age, veteran status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or any other characteristic prohibited by law.